

REMARKS

In view of the final Action, claims 4 and 10 have been amended to independent form, and claims 8 and 9 have been cancelled. No new issue is introduced in the amendments.

On page 2 of the final Action, claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Boik.

In claims 1 and 4, the hole plug includes a plurality of supporting means. Each supporting means is disposed between the column and each of the plate members so that the column is connected to each of the plate members through each of the supporting means, and the supporting means supports and suppresses the plate member from bending inwardly.

In Fig. 14 of Boik, a closure unit 74 includes an end panel 55, annular wall 64 extending from a back surface of the end panel 55, and retaining lugs 56 extending from the back surface of the end panel 55 and circumferentially spaced apart from each other. The annular wall 64 is provided with back-up lugs 75 adjacent the end panel 55. When the retaining lugs 56 deform inwardly, the lugs 75 contact surfaces 65 of the lugs 56, thereby controlling an extent of the deformation of the retaining lugs 56.

In claims 1 and 4, each supporting means is disposed between the column and each of the plate members so that the column is connected to each of the plate members through each of the supporting means. In Boik, the back-up lugs 75 are attached to the annular wall 64, but spaced from the retaining lug 56. Thus, the annular wall 64 is NOT connected to each of the retaining lug 56. In claims 1 and 4, the column is connected to each plate member through each supporting means, so that there is no space between the supporting means and the plate members. In Boik, there is no disclosure or suggestion that the annular wall 64 or column is connected to each of the lugs 56 or plate members through each of the supporting means. Therefore, Boik does not disclose or suggest the features of the invention as recited in claims 1 and 4.

In claim 4, in addition to the above structure, each of the supporting means is integrated with the back surface of the head portion. Namely, the column is connected to each of the plate

members through each of the supporting means integrated with the back surface of the head portion. This structure is not disclosed in Boik.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 4 are not anticipated by Boik.

In regard to the rejection of claims 8 and 9 on page 2 of the final Action, claims 8 and 9 have been cancelled.

On page 3 of the final Action, claims 1, 2 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kraus et al.

In Fig. 6 of Kraus et al., a collar 8 extends from a closure plate 4, and a protrusion 9 is formed on a back surface of an arm 7 facing the collar 8' for limiting a radial inward movement of the arm 7. Kraus et al. states that, although not shown, it is possible to provide the collar 8 with a support always lying across from the inside of the arm 7.

In claim 1, each supporting means is disposed between the column and each of the plate members so that the column is connected to each of the plate members through each of the supporting means, and the supporting means supports and suppresses the plate member from bending inwardly. In Kraus et al., the protrusion is formed on the back surface of the arm facing the collar for limiting a radial inward movement of the arm. However, the collar 8' is NOT connected to each of the arm 7 through each of the protrusion 9. Namely, there is a space between the arm and the collar.

In regard to the statement of providing the collar 8 with a support always lying across from the inside of the arm 7 in Kraus et al., it does not mean that the column is connected to each of the plate members through each of the supporting means, and the supporting means supports and suppresses the plate member from bending inwardly, as recited in claim 1.

Claim 1 is not anticipated by Kraus et al.

In regard to the rejection of claims 6 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boik in view of Mejlso, since claims 6 and 13 depend from claim 1, the argument for claim 1 is incorporated herein.

In Mejlso, a fastener 10 is made of a resilient material, and

includes a shank 13 and an enlarged head 11. The shank 13 has a U-shaped portion comprising two limbs 19 and 20 joined by a web 21, and two reversely bent extensions 17 and 18. Although the shank 13 has the wavy shape, in claim 6, the supporting means disposed between the column and each of the plate members as recited in claim 1 has a wavy plate shape, which is not obvious from Boik and Mejlso.

On page 4 of the final Action, claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boik in view of Jeager. Since claim 7 depends from claim 1, the argument for claim 1 is incorporated herein.

As shown in Figs. 1 to 3 of Jaeger, a seal plug 10 includes a cover cap 12; a set of retaining tabs 32, 34, 36 and 38; and a set of guide elements 60, 62, 64 and 66. The guide elements 60, 62, 64 and 66 are disposed on a bottom face of the seal plug for defining a first lead-in surface. Although the guide elements are shown in Jeager, the basic structure of claim 1 is not disclosed in Boik and Jeager, claim 6 is not obvious from Boik and Jeager.

Claims 8-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boik in view of Mejlso and Jeager.

Claims 8 and 9 have been cancelled. Claim 10 now amended to independent form has a plurality of supporting means disposed between the column and each of the plate members for connecting the column and the plate member to prevent the plate member from bending inwardly.

As explained before, Boik does not have the supporting means disposed between the column and each of the plate members for connecting the column and the plate member to prevent the plate member from bending inwardly. The lug 75 referred to as the supporting means of the invention does not connect the annular wall 64 as the column and the lug 56 as the plate member. Mejlso discloses the wavy shank and Jeager discloses the guide elements. Even if Boik, Mejlso and Jeager are referred to, claim 10, especially, the hole plug having the supporting means, is not obvious.


As explained above, the cited references do not disclose or

suggest the features of the invention. Even if the cited references are combined, the invention is not obvious.

Reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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